

That will be secured the more readily if assurance is forthcoming that the institutions on and through which that expenditure is incurred are most efficiently and wisely administered. If proposals such as Prof. Williams advances, on the ground of making the most efficient use of universities and their staffs, for giving two courses in one year and doubling the academic staff, are to be rejected, it must be for convincing and valid reasons and not merely on grounds of tradition. Here again is room for much critical thinking, though it is only fair to note that both the University Grants Committee and the Advisory Council for Scientific Policy are already fully aware that much more effective use could be made of academic staff both in teaching and in research if they were provided with more ancillary assistance.

Here again the problem is largely one of finance in which the Government's start-stop policy is liable to prove penny-wise pound-foolish. It is reasonable to expect of university institutions that they should, as Prof. Williams urges, make the best possible use of their equipment and facilities, that they should be efficiently managed and that they should see that their most precious and expensive asset—their highly trained staff—should be provided with whatever assistance it needs to give of its best and that it should not be employed on duties for which much less highly trained labour is competent. But this is not the only test of an institution of university rank. If it is to exercise its vital creative function, whether in teaching or research, if it is really to father discovery, to use Dr. Magnus Pyke's apt phrase, it must first ensure that it provides the fundamental conditions in which creative work is possible.

LAW, HISTORY AND LAND USE

The Common Lands of England and Wales

By Dr. W. G. Hoskins and Prof. L. Dudley Stamp. (The New Naturalist: a Survey of British Natural History.) Pp. xvii + 366 + 28 plates. (London: William Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., 1963.) 42s. net.

COMMON land is probably the most misunderstood part of our national heritage, and therefore a volume giving a clear account of the issue is welcome. The joint authors were members of the Royal Commission on Common Land, and each contributed an appendix to the report. They now present their findings in a readable and telling form.

The term 'common land' has no precise meaning in England and Wales (it does not exist as such in Scotland) and the nearest estimate of the area is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ m. acres—a formidable 4 per cent of the land surface. The importance of common land lies in the number of interested parties of whom, apart from those concerned with agriculture, recreation and building development, there is a succession of historians, geographers, archaeologists, ecologists, conservationists and Nature lovers. The legal tangles concerning doubtful ownership, the uncertain rights of the commoners and questions concerning public access frequently defy the understanding of even the initiated, and have been responsible for limiting, and even prohibiting, the purposeful use of certain commons, and encouraging the dereliction of others in both upland and lowland areas.

Dr. Hoskins traces the history of common land, and although the origin is obscure the common rights antedate the very conception of private property. Since the imposition of the manorial organization all such land has been, and still is, private property, owned by the lord of the manor, or his descendant or his legal represen-

tative. Common land is unique in that a large number of people have legal rights over the area which they exercise in common. The main use to which it is put is grazing and the gathering of wood for fuel, but there are other customs, some long in disuse, which made common land essential for peasant economy up to the end of the eighteenth century. The public by custom, with or without rights, wander more or less freely over the common land areas.

The history is interesting and often exciting. The vast reservoir of land that existed at the time of the Domesday Book has been drawn on heavily by an increasing population from the eleventh century onwards, leading eventually to stinting on common land, and inevitably to bitter disputes which reached a climax during the period of Parliamentary Inclosure. A movement to protect common land was bound to follow, but it left in its wake a system of laws and rules far from beneficial to present-day needs.

Prof. Dudley Stamp deals with the general state and usage of commons, features of special interest and geographical distribution; the geographical distribution depends largely on soil type, terrain and geological factors. The picture is presented on a regional basis, starting with the lowland heart of England where commons are few, moving progressively to the upland areas where commons are more widespread—the north of England and Wales (30 per cent of Breconshire is common land).

Research workers and those professionally concerned will find a wealth of information in this part of the book, also in the appendix that follows extending to more than 100 pages and providing for the first time a county-by-county list of the known commons, village greens, common gravel pits and fuel allotments of England (Wales presented an impossible confusion!). Other readers will doubtless concentrate on the areas with which they are most familiar—their native heath or favourite fell. Readers who delve deeper than this will find that no two commons are alike and they will be rewarded by fascinating reading of history, anachronism, human fallibility as well as fact. One is often surprised by the wide range of activities and opportunities that exist on common land.

The authors maintain a balanced view and a sympathetic appreciation of the demands of all concerned.

ROY HUGHES

IMMUNOLOGICAL PHENOMENA AND CLINICAL ALLERGY

Allergology

Proceedings of the IVth International Congress of Allergology, New York City, October 15–20, 1961. Edited by Ethan Allan Brown. Pp. xii + 455. (London and New York: Pergamon Press, 1962.) 105s.

IN this volume some of the promise of the rapidly increasing understanding of immunological phenomena for clinical allergy is foreshadowed, although the gap between scientific and clinical aspects is still only too obvious. The rate of progress is shown by Dr. J. M. Andrews's comments on the meteoric increase, from £30,000 to £2 million devoted to this subject by the United States in the past six years, and in the number of projects from 9 to 277. One wonders how the figures for the United Kingdom compare with this.

Of the 43 papers by leading workers, at least half are well worth reading. Part 1, the most impressive of seven parts, commences with a review by M. Heidelberger on the "Unity and Heterogeneity of Antibodies", showing how the introduction of precise quantitative chemical micro-methods, established, for example, the identity of agglutinins and precipitins, and the predictability of cross- and homologous-specific reactions, based on the chemical structure of antigens and particularly of poly-